

# NE VISTAs News

## THE IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK

The concept of teamwork is extremely important to the success of any team. All coaches talk about working as one unit, as a unified team. Teamwork and unselfishness create the backbone of a great team, without them a team cannot realistically compete. You can have a group of superstars, but if they do not work well as one unit, chances are they are not going to be as successful as you would think. The team working as one cohesive unit is going to be the key in their success.

A productive team has players that share common goals, a common vision and have some level of interdependence that requires both verbal and physical interaction. Teams come into existence through shared attitudes about a particular sport. They may come together for a number of different reasons, but their goals are the same - to achieve peak performance and experience success. The ends may differ but the means by which one gets there is the same - teamwork. Every member of the team is accountable when it comes to teamwork.

To succeed at the task in hand everyone involved needs to combine their efforts. If everyone does their job well, then it increases what the team can accomplish. This teamwork has to be recognized by everyone and know that great things can happen if individuals master the fundamentals and work together as one unit. Everyone has their own unique role, but each person's individual role must be recognized and appreciated.

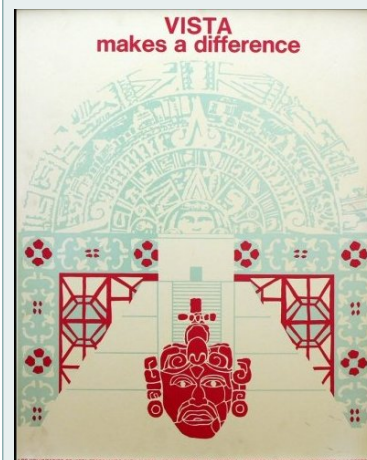
Teamwork is something that must be a high priority and given constant attention. Every player needs to understand how important it is for them to work smoothly together if they want to be successful. Each player must be dedicated to the whole team and be willing to act unselfishly. When challenges arise (as they always do), the team needs to have the resources, accountability and commitment to deal with them in a constructive and positive manner. A sense of teamwork will play an integral part in this.

Just remember T.E.A.M. - Together Everyone Achieves More!

(SUGARMAN, K. (2004) Understanding the Importance of Teamwork [WWW] Available from: <http://www.brianmac.co.uk/articles/scni13a2.htm>)

## GIVING CIRCLES

This idea was recently presented at the Student Leadership Conference held at Metropolitan Community College. According to Wikipedia "Giving Circles are a form of philanthropy where groups of individuals donate their own money or time to a pooled fund, decide together where to give these away to charity community projects and, in doing so, seek to increase their awareness of and engagement in the issues covered by the charity or community project. Many circles, in addition to donating their money, also contribute their time and skills to supporting local causes." Days of service would fall under this description but if wanted to do a little more, why not form a group with your fellow VISTAs to start a giving circle for a non-profit of choice in your community? For an example of a local Omaha group check out <http://omahaventure.org/>



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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Get to know your fellow VISTA members and alumni.
- Learn about the great work that VISTAs are doing in Nebraska.
- Have an idea or story? Share it!

## GETTING TO KNOW YOU— VISTA LEADERS



Ben Alamprese

What is your dream job?  
My dream job is to start my own non-profit organization which would function as a one-stop center for people in poverty. I would essentially like to continue my community organizing and

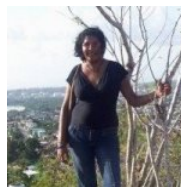
resource development that I started in VISTA but take a more direct approach to empower communities affected by poverty.

What is the one thing that you cannot live without?  
Love.

What's your biggest pet peeve?  
The phrase "pet peeve."

What is your favorite food?  
Stir-fry

What do you splurge on to treat yourself?  
2-ply toilet paper



Del Bharath

What was your favorite part about PSO?  
Meeting the other VISTAs. I made a good few friends and we still get together for mini reunions. They let me vent.

Who is your favorite band or musician?  
MUMFORD & SONS. They are music gods. Was super excited to get a chance to see them perform while in Omaha.

What inspires you?  
People. People that do extra to make the world a better place. Random acts of kindness. Any proof on the positive amazingness of people.

What is your biggest pet peeve?  
People who don't take responsibility for their actions and play the blame game. And smiley faces in professional emails.

What was your favorite cartoon as a child?  
Captain Planet, Smurfs and Thundercats. And Fraggle Rock, if that can be considered a cartoon.

**"Be who you are and say what you feel, because those who matter don't mind and those that mind, don't matter" ~ Dr. Seuss**

### HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

We want to wish a "Happy Birthday" to VISTAs and staff celebrating their birthdays this month!

October 28th —Lisa Z



### TAGXEDO

Tagxedo ([www.tagxedo.com](http://www.tagxedo.com)) is a simple, fun and creative site that you can use to turn words -- famous speeches, news articles, slogans and themes, even your blogs -- into a visually stunning word cloud. Words are individually sized appropriately to highlight the frequencies of occurrence within the body of text.

To create the word cloud example on the right I went to Tagxedo and just pasted in the url for our Nebraska VISTA blog. I chose

the shape and orientation and presto, I was given the image. Tagxedo found the most commonly used words on the blog page and filled in the selected star shape. The words that were used more frequently like VISTA, service and work, appear larger in the cloud than words that are used less frequently. You can change the shape, fonts and colors and create unique clouds to match your needs. You can also input RSS feeds, news, twitter feeds, or type in words of your own.

Be creative. Tagxedo.



## ALUMNI STORY— HOLLY NEWMAN DZYBAN

I applied to serve as a VISTA with a tribal endangered language program in the fall of 2002. After a jovial phone call with the VISTA supervisor, I was enthusiastic. However, I didn't want to commit myself without seeing the place, so I drove two hours to the reservation for a brief visit.



When I arrived, I met a new VISTA supervisor—the previous one had resigned a week after I talked to her. The new supervisor graciously led me around the small reservation town. We visited the building that housed the language program—locked, since the staff had already gone home. We stopped by the VISTA lodging, a four-bedroom structure in the tribe's public housing project. The two VISTAs in residence were friendly and welcoming, but I couldn't help but notice that the place had no furniture. The supervisor assured me that this was only temporary.

Despite these signs, I opted to serve as a VISTA on the reservation. The idea of rescuing a language from the brink of extinction was irresistible, and really, what was the worst that could happen?

When I arrived two months later, along with five other new VISTAs, the house still had no furniture. Our supervisor drove us 20 miles to the nearest city for groceries, then asked us to reimburse him for gas. He took us around to our various workplaces, where we each discovered no work plan and little idea as to what we would do during our year of service. He told us we had a great opportunity to dedicate the VISTA house by cooking a meal and hosting a prayer meeting for him there.

The next day, our furniture arrived—saggy beds cast off from the tribal casino hotel.

A week later, the VISTA supervisor stopped showing up for work.

A week after that, the VISTA supervisor's supervisor called to say that the VISTA grant was expiring, and if someone didn't fill out the new paperwork, we would all be out of a job. Two of us spent a long afternoon and evening filling out the indicated twelve pages.

The next day, a seventh VISTA came to my workplace and screamed at me for 30 minutes because I had given the completed grant to said supervisor instead of him.

Then the head of public housing called to say the VISTAs had to move, since we lived in the only handicapped-accessible unit in the project...and someone needed it.

By the end of our first 90 days, four of the VISTAs had had it. Despite a half-hearted attempt by the state coordinator to mediate the situation, those four were gone by the end of the summer.

Two of us remained.

It sounds like a nightmare; I know it does. And sometimes it was. But sometimes it wasn't.

Three days a week, we had language classes with a tribal elder. Tiny, grey-haired, nearly toothless and practically deaf, Stanford was a treasure. He spoke the language with a twinkle in his eye, translating silly things like my superhero t-shirt that read "Evil beware!" He did not particularly like maixetes—white people—but he allowed us to stay. He shared what he had. He welcomed us.

My site supervisor, Elaine, told us all about the language program, then allowed us to choose what we wanted to work on. I selected the language recordings archive—2756 cassette tapes filled with interviews, dialogs, language classes and just plain talk. The recordings needed to be moved to a digital format and transcribed, because no one knew for sure what was on most of the tapes. For the next four years, my work life revolved around those tapes.

In January, we two remaining VISTAs requested an extension of service.

In April 2004 I submitted my first grant application, a request for more than \$300,000 from the Administration of Native Americans. I knew we would not receive it—I had no previous experience as a grant writer, and the proposal was vague and unformed. Two months later, my boss told me our funding would arrive in October.

The VISTA term extension ended, but we still did not want to leave. My boss requested money to fund our positions, but the tribe declined. My coworkers passed the hat and gave each of us nearly \$150 to tide us over until the first grant check arrived a few weeks later.

When my daughter was born and began accompanying me to work, an office full of devoted aunts held her and cuddled her and rocked her to sleep.

When the tribe decided to lay off all non-Indian employees of the language program, my coworkers went en masse to the tribal council chambers to protest.

My years on the reservation were a challenge. They were hard, they were frustrating, they were incomprehensible at times. Again and again my family asked why I stayed.

But the truth is, my time there was also wonderful. I encountered incredibly generous hearts, I learned a language most people have never even heard, and I made a difference in the lives of those around me.

And that, I think, is why I wanted to be a VISTA in the first place.

Holly served as a VISTA with a tribal endangered language program from 2002–2003. Currently she is at City Sprouts working with grant writing and coordination.

### DATES TO REMEMBER

October 7th  
Monthly report due

October 8th  
Binational Health Week—  
FREE Flu shots

October 12th  
Big O Show

October 13th  
Coming out Day

October 17th  
Service-Learning Workshop

October 18th  
Grant writing workshop

October 19th  
Invisible Children Presenta-  
tion

October 21st  
VISTA Monthly Member  
Meeting

October 28th  
Re-engage Omaha Mileage  
sheets due  
Blog contest entries due

October 31st  
Halloween



## FUN EVENTS IN THE AREA

Vala's Pumpkin Patch  
Through the entire month of October. Roam through corn mazes, have hot apple cider and take a hayride. There is lots to do at Vala's.

[www.valaspumpkinpatch.com/](http://www.valaspumpkinpatch.com/)

Lincoln Calling  
Tuesday, October 11th—16th  
This is an annual music event where local Lincoln and Omaha bands showcase their talents. If you are into indie music this is a must do.  
<https://www.facebook.com/#!/event.php?eid=249976825023941>

Bellevue Berry & Pumpkin Patch. Through the entire month of October. For the more brave at heart this berry and pumpkin patch features a haunted house and a hay ride through a spooky forest.  
<http://www.bellevueberryfarm.com/pumpkinroundup.html>

Lincoln Haunted Bus Tour  
The 4th annual tour will drive by some of the alleged haunted houses (and buildings) of Lincoln at night as Ghosts of Lincoln Tour Director Dale Bacon tells stories about ghosts and what people saw. Lots of new ghost stories plus the best of the old. <http://www.lincoln.org/events/calendar/details?fdid=556985>

For a list of places and events you can visit this fall check out [http://journalstar.com/lifestyles/article\\_7fc2659f-88da-5a04-852d-d34bdb77968f.html](http://journalstar.com/lifestyles/article_7fc2659f-88da-5a04-852d-d34bdb77968f.html)



## BLOG CONTEST WINNER!

Congrats to last month's blog winner—AmeriCorps VISTA Summer Lamb, for her blog ["What do AmeriCorps VISTAs working in Omaha do?"](#)

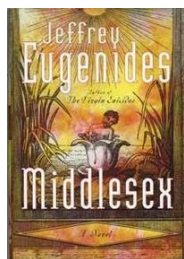
Summer currently serves as a VISTA with the Re-engage Omaha Program working on Re-entry initiatives. In her blog she discusses some of the issues that she found in Omaha and ways that she is going on about working on these issues.

"For my part I did something small. Something many would say has nothing to do with fighting poverty. But a man named Willie Barney said two things in a meeting one day that inspired me to make my small steps this year. When asked what a need in the community was, the first thing he said was, "For our youth to not go to jail and prison." The next thing he said was, "We need to see young black men reading to our youth, we need to see mentoring, we need our youth to be literate.""

"So art and poetry may not seem like an obvious way to fight poverty, but it is a small step toward changing a culture. It gave a voice to kids who cannot speak for themselves. It made a few people think that just a small amount of their time could change a kid's life. It promoted literacy among those who thought reading and writing was a waste of time. It gave a silent youth an outlet for the feelings trapped inside. And maybe, just maybe, this simple little art show will start something in Omaha that might change a generation."

Thanks for taking the time to share your story with us! You are an inspiration to all.

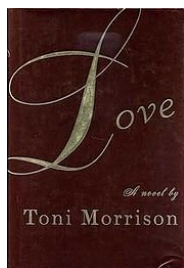
## WHAT WE ARE READING



Neil T: MVP VISTA Re-engage Omaha re-entry Initiative

Middlesex

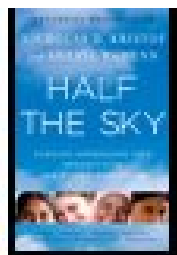
By Jeffrey Eugenides



Del B: MVP VISTA Leader Re-engage Omaha

Love

by Toni Morrison



Melissa B — MVP VISTA Re-engage Omaha Public Health Initiative

Half the Sky

by Nicholas D. Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn



## RECIPES UNDER \$10—BAKED HAM SANDWICH

SUBMITTED BY MELISSA BAUGHMAN

### INGREDIENTS

2 1/2 tablespoons of butter/margarine, softened  
2 tablespoons of dried minced onion  
2/12 tablespoons of mustard  
2 tablespoons poppy seeds  
2 hamburger buns, split  
4 slices of deli ham  
2 slices of swiss cheese

### DIRECTIONS

1. In a bowl, combine butter, onion, mustard and poppy seeds. Spread about 1 tablespoon over both halves of buns. Layer ham and cheese on the bottom halves; replace tops. Wrap each sandwich in foil. Bake at 350 degrees F for 6-10 minutes or until cheese is melted, or freeze for up to 2 months.
2. To use frozen sandwiches: Bake at 350 degrees F for 30-35 minutes or until cheese is melted.



Have a favorite recipe (under \$10) you want to share with everyone? Email it to [nevis-taleaders@gmail.com](mailto:nevis-taleaders@gmail.com) and we will feature it in one of the upcoming newsletters.

“What do you live for, if it is not to make life less difficult for each other.”  
~ George Eliot

## PROJECT SPOTLIGHT— COMING OUT DAY

SUBMITTED BY MARCIA PURDY

National Coming Out Day (NCOD) is an internationally observed civil awareness day for coming out and discussion about gays lesbians, bisexuals, and transgender people (LGBT). It is observed by members of the LGBT communities and their supporters (often referred to as allies.) on October 11 every year.

Events are held annually to celebrate coming out and to raise awareness of the LGBT community and LGBT rights movement. Participants are encouraged to wear pride symbols, such as the pink triangle or rainbows in jewelry and on clothing.

Even as we have witnessed an unfolding space of LGBT youth suicides, we have also witnessed a more vocal support for LGBTs and LGBT youth emerge. Too often those voices of affirmation are overpowered by rhetoric and dogma, but that needn't be the case. National Coming Out Day seems like a perfect time to come out if you are a straight advocate

too.

This year at Metropolitan Community College in Omaha, NE there will be a first ever celebration of NCOD. Tabling will be held to garner support for the new Student Organization, Spectrum Alliance. Spectrum will also be showing the movie “Out in America.” “Out in America” is a multi-layered portrait of LGBT Americans through their own words and experiences. The fill will connect the common themes running through numerous personal stories about growing up, nurturing relationships, overcoming social and familial challenges, fighting discrimination and HIV, and achieving individual status and respect in America.

Marcia Purdy is currently serving as a VISTA on the Re-engage Omaha project working on High School Retention Initiatives.



OCTOBER 11

## AMERICORPS VISTA

AmeriCorps VISTA is the national service program designed specifically to fight poverty. Founded as Volunteers in Service to America in 1965 and incorporated into the AmeriCorps network of programs in 1993, VISTA has been on the front lines in the fight against poverty in America for more than 40 years.

[www.americorps.gov](http://www.americorps.gov)

## NE VISTA NEWS

This is the official newsletter for the Nebraska VISTAs! We hope that you enjoyed it and it gave you some useful information as well as a glimpse into who our VISTAs are what they are doing this year.

We do this monthly but we need your help. In order to improve it, we need to know what you think.

Do you have any comments or feedback? Have a story to share? Want to see something featured in an upcoming newsletter? Have a question about VISTA that you need to have answered? Is there a resource or training you have come across that you think that other VISTAs could benefit from? Is there any misinformation or corrections to be noted? Any exciting news that you would like to share?

If you answered YES to any of the above (or have an idea not mentioned) please email [nevistaleaders@gmail.com](mailto:nevistaleaders@gmail.com) and we will be sure to include it in future newsletters.

Also be sure to check us out online:

On Facebook: [NebraskaVISTAs](https://www.facebook.com/NebraskaVISTAs)

VISTA Blog: <http://nebraskavista.wordpress.com/>

Hope to hear from you soon!



### AmeriCorps VISTA

Metropolitan Community College  
FOC Building 14S  
Omaha, NE 68103

Phone: 402 457 2608

Fax: 402 457 2643

E-mail: [nevistaleaders@gmail.com](mailto:nevistaleaders@gmail.com)

### AmeriCorps Pledge

I will get things done for America -  
To make our people safer, smarter, and healthier.

I will bring Americans together to strengthen our communities.

Faced with apathy, I will take action.

Faced with conflict, I will seek common ground.

Faced with adversity, I will persevere.

I will carry this commitment with me this year and beyond.

I am an AmeriCorps member, and I will get things done.

